

**Community Preservation Act Committee (CPAC)
Meeting Minutes
Thursday, January 7, 2010**

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm by Peter Jessop, Chair, in the Town Room at Town Hall.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Denise Barberet, John Gerber, Louis Greenbaum, Michael Jacques, Peter Jessop, Chair; Ellen Kosmer, Mary Streeter, Clerk; Vince O'Connor, Vice Chair; Stan Ziomek

STAFF / OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Sonia Aldrich, Alisa Brewer, Sarah McKee

Agenda

1. Financial Review
2. Review proposals in detail and formulate questions
3. Discuss setting aside money in a reserve fund
4. Approve any minutes
5. Adjourn

Financial Review

\$17,200 was set aside at the 2009 Annual Town Meeting as part of the required minimum 10% for affordable housing. The Town Manager's email states that there may be a recommendation to rescind the \$150,000 appropriation for affordable housing mortgage subsidies because individuals with appropriate income have not been found. Questions were raised about the status of the Main Street lots project. The Town cannot pay more for the lots than the appraised value; the owner doesn't want to sell for that amount; and private fundraising has not made up the difference. The Historical Commission will discuss this situation at its next meeting. Peter said he'd remind the Historical Commission that we need information about this project.

There is \$497,610.79 plus the \$17,200, which equals \$514,200 to fund FY11 previously obligated and new projects. This amount does not include the recommended rescission in the Town Manager's email, so we could anticipate having this \$150,000 available for housing or other projects. Denise reminded that we will need to examine housing funding for that year to make sure this was not part of the required 10% set aside, otherwise part of it would have to stay in housing.

Review proposals in detail and formulate questions

On January 7, 2010 the CPA Committee reviewed proposals in detail and formulated questions in addition to those communicated to staff on Dec. 17, 2009. Peter suggested we focus on what additional information is needed for each proposal. Denise reminded us that the follow-up letter that was sent to proposal authors, stated that the CPA Committee would like to receive additional information 5 days in advance of the presentation. Mary asked that as much information as possible be provided electronically as well, so that it can be made available to the public via the CPA webpage. Materials can be emailed to the committee. Sonia Aldrich will relay our questions to the proposals authors.

Open Space

Appraisals & Surveys – \$25,000

- We would like an update on appraisal money spent to date and for what parcels.
- Which of the current projects' appraisals have been paid and which still need to be paid?
- What are the appraisal costs for each of the current projects?
- Have current projects' appraisals been paid for already?

Land Conservation – \$150,000

- Which project is the highest priority?
- We would like a list of current projects ranked by priority along with actual appraisal amounts for each property.

- What is the total amount for each project?
- They have listed potential funding sources. We would like to see a table listing other funding sources along with the Town's match for APR or CRs, appraisal amount, etc.
- Please provide information on whether any of the parcels are accompanied by a gift of land for conservation purposes from abutters, etc. Is this the case for the Cole property?
- What is the status of negotiations on each parcel?
- Please provide CPAC with a "cheat sheet" defining terms such as "in fee", APR, CR, etc.
- Can we repay Kestrel in installments for the Szwacz property? Does it all have to be paid this year, i.e. can we repay \$9000 each year?
- Will either a storage or office building be built if CPAC funds a CR or APR on the Andrews/ Laverdiere land? If yes, how will this affect the value of the land for conservation or APR purposes?
- Where are they in the process of this project? How likely is it to happen?

South Amherst Conservation Association – Purchase of old Rock farm on South East Street **- \$_____ set aside**

- How much do they want set aside from CPA?
- What is the appraisal amount?
- What is the price the owner is willing to sell for?
- Is there a willing seller?
- Where does this fit in the priorities of the Conservation Commission?
- What's the current status of multiple sources for funding?
- Where else would money come from?
- Is there any possibility of obtaining State Recreation or PARC funding?
- What is the South Amherst Conservation Association?

Historic Preservation

Historical Commission

- We would like a clear prioritization of Historic Preservation proposals.
- Were all of the projects listed on the Historical Commission's list recommended by the Historical Commission? What were the votes and dates? What issues relate to the projects.

West Cemetery Headstone & Monument Restoration Phase 2 – \$100,000

- When was the Historic Landscape Assessment of West Cemetery Monuments & Markers prepared?
- Is it accurate to say there are only 14 stones in severe condition? When they are talking about severe condition, what do they mean? Do they mean actual deterioration of the stone? It appears that many have just been pushed off the base. Do they need a conservator or can they just be reset or reglued on their base by DPW?
- What specifically justifies funding of \$100,000 if indeed there are only 14 that are in severe condition? How was the figure of \$100,000 determined?
- If our limited resources would require that this be phased, could we get a breakdown on the phasing – the most critical, severely damaged stones that might need immediate work? Would there be a second number for a lesser amount of work?
- We would like to see a breakdown of which/how many stones simply need to be righted and which are deteriorated and falling apart.
- Marble headstones require a different amount of money for repairs.
- What specifically does the \$100,000 get for the Town?
- Several of the headstones that have recently been repaired have been vandalized again. We would like to see what kind of assessment of that has been done, what kind of vandalism was done, and how severe it was.
- Is there a plan in place to address the situation of continuing damage to stones possibly by mowing machines? Can volunteer help by the Stockbridge Fraternity be enlisted to do hand

trimming close to the stones?

- How much money has been spent on West Cemetery preservation (or encumbered) by the Town in the last 10 years?

Town Clerk & Special Collections Archival Materials – \$20,000 total

- We would like an update on what has been spent from past CPA funds and for what.
- Specifically, what will new money be spent for?
- Have the needs for Special Collections preservation materials (i.e. need for photo preservation materials, etc.) shown to Town Meeting members on last year's Bus Tour been addressed already?
- Have old Town Meeting Records earlier than the 1990's been preserved and are they available electronically?
- Will materials that have been preserved or are being preserved, be available digitally for access via the web?
- Are there additional archival materials that need to be preserved or is this the last year that this request will be made?

Amherst History Museum – roof repair, electrical update, window frame repair & UV protection – \$45,000

- We would like a prioritization of the cost estimates for each of the items.
- What other sources of funding are there?
- Can they live with partial funding, for example if we just funded the roof?
- Will the Town get a historic preservation restriction on the building?
- What will be the costs of a preservation restriction?

Emily Dickinson Museum Ceiling Repairs/Preservation – \$50,000

- What is total cost of project?
- What other sources of funding have been acquired?
- The building is owned by Amherst College. What contribution will Amherst College make?
- Was the \$50,000 listed on the Historical Commission proposal actually voted by the Historical Commission?
- What was the Historical Commission's vote and stance on this project?
- What issues have been raised concerning this project?
- If CPA gave a small amount of seed money for the project, would that help the Museum secure larger funding elsewhere?
- Will the Town get a historic preservation restriction on the building?
- What will be the costs of a preservation restriction?

Town Common Historical Research and Survey – \$25,000

- Who does it?
- How urgent is it?
- How many surveys or studies of the Common have been done in the past?
- What new information are we seeking?
- Why is this information needed at this time?
- How was this figure determined?
- Is this really a priority for the Historical Commission this year given our current financial circumstances?

Previously Obligated – Kimball House – \$25,600 & Town Hall Masonry Funding – \$41,300

- How & when will the final \$100,000 payment or land set aside for Kimball House compensation be resolved?

Library

- We would like specific detail on the status and results of the studies.

- We would like a very clear presentation of where they are with respect to cost estimates, bids, and whether cost estimates are firm.
- We urge the library to provide us with detailed cost estimates and how they were derived by our public hearing on February 18 or earlier.

Library Roof Restoration – \$40,000

- We would like more information from the study.
- Who did it?
- What are the results of the study? Did it determine where the leaks were coming from?
- How urgent is it?
- Were town staff involved?
- What parts of the roof are involved?
- What does the \$40,000 buy?
- Are there bids from bona fide slate roofers?
- Are there cost estimates available?
- Is this a multi-year project? Will we receive a request to repair another part of the roof in a future year?
- What is the scope of the repairs needed?
- What alternative types of repair can be done – will this be a top of the line or moderate repair job?
- Has this project been submitted to JCPC for funding?

Library Special Collections HVAC – \$30,000

- Has the study been done? We would like to have as much information as possible as soon as possible.
- If the \$10,000 has not yet been spent for the study, how was the figure of \$30,000 arrived at?
- At what stage are we – what has been done, what still needs to be done, and what is a reasonable estimate of future expenses?
- Do you have bids?
- Will \$30,000 do the whole thing?
- Is this just for the 3 rooms in Special Collection?
- Does it tie in with the HVAC in the rest of the Library?
- Has this project been submitted to JCPC for funding?

North Amherst Library Exterior Work – \$12,000

- Exactly what work will be done for \$12,000 and how long is it predicted to last?
- What will be the lifespan of the work to be done?
- We would like a clear, definitive opinion from Town Counsel as to whether the scraping and painting to be done might be considered “maintenance” under the CPA law.
- Has this project been submitted to JCPC for funding?

Affordable Housing

- Do a table of information for each project.
- We would like an update on Olympia Drive and housing for the homeless.

Amherst Housing Authority Renovations – Phase 1 – 10 units/ 5 duplexes on Stanley, Jenks, and Olympia – \$145,000

- These units are under 20 years old. What exactly are the types of renovations to be done? Interior & exterior? Appliances?
- Has there been any attempt to get donations or discounts by buying in bulk for items such as appliances?
- The letter from the Bureau of Housing Development & Construction discusses Amherst’s portfolio of 159 units estimating an allocation of \$350,000-\$600,000 for the next 5 years for

all of those units. What sort of need is there for the remaining units? How much will be requested in the future from CPA?

- What is covered by the \$1,744,078 (referred to in the letter) for 22 units?
- What are the actual total numbers?
- Is the CDBG grant money in hand?
- What other sources of funds are there?
- What will per unit costs be? Why is there a discrepancy between per unit costs between Phase 1 & 2?
- What is the expected life of these renovations?
- Will any solar or alternative energy devices be installed?
- Will green building practices be used?

Housing Partnership/Fair Housing Committee University Drive Affordable Housing – 44 units – \$150,000 reallocated CPA funds plus \$750,000 over 10 years

- We would like to know how it makes sense for us to prioritize this project when the land is not controlled by the developer, the wetlands are not determined, and the zoning is not in place.
- We would like more information on the developers? Who are they? Why do they want to do this? What is the benefit to them? What is the benefit to the Town?
- How much of the \$150,000 for mortgage subsidies was in the 10% required to be set aside for affordable housing?
- How many elderly low-income households are on the waiting list?
- Of the 150 applications for the Main Street affordable housing, how many were for elderly low-income households? We would like to hear more about the need for affordable rental housing for the elderly.
- What is the status of the wetlands determination?
- Is this project ready? Does it make sense to do it at this point in time?
- Is the sort of zoning change appropriate – limited Office Park zoning in Town?
- Would student housing be more appropriate on University Drive?
- Is this the best place in town to site elderly housing?
- Will this housing be restricted to people over 55?
- How many people on the waiting list will be able to afford these units?
- How much of this includes the costs for infrastructure (roadway, water & sewer pipes, etc.) for the entire site? Phase 2 is for retail and market rate units. How much of the infrastructure costs will be borne by the front units?
- Why was it decided that lower income folks would live in the rear units with market rate units in the front rather than having the units of mixed income in both buildings?
- We would like to hear more about the timeline for development – zoning change, procurement of property, wetlands determination.
- Will any solar or alternative energy devices be installed?
- Will green building practices be used?

Habitat for Humanity – 4th Home on Stanley Street – \$50,000

- Given the construction schedule, would it be possible to break the request in half between this year and next year?
- Would it work for partial funding now and partial funding in the Fall of 2010?
- Will the \$20,000 actually get the photovoltaic systems done?

Open Space - Recreation

- We would like an update on the appraisal amount, owner's desired price, and status of negotiations for the Hawthorne property. Exactly what would the Town be getting?
- Has LSSE approached the school department about possibly sharing the cost of this property via a package deal since the schools would definitely benefit – use of E&D funds, grants, etc.?

- Will there be an initial document describing how these fields will be used? Describe the availability for the public and for the schools.
- Will LSSE come back in the future for funding to develop this property? What kind/amounts of requests are there likely to be?
- Is this a doable project? What will happen to the house?
- Is there a plan for this property? Can we see it?
- Will community gardens be a use?
- Is there any thought of building a recreation center?
- Can the house be rehabilitated for affordable housing?
- What is the timeline for this project?
- What are the other sources of funding that will be used?
- Was the house on a legal lot appraised separately from the whole parcel?

Administrative Costs

- Community Preservation Coalition – \$1,500
- Legal ads
 - How much does a legal ad in the Bulletin or Gazette for 2 weeks cost?

Setting aside Money in a Reserve Fund – \$_____

Members discussed possible advantages and disadvantages of setting aside some money for funding projects either next Fall or in a future year. This will be an ongoing discussion as we learn about the urgency, worth, and readiness of current proposals. Amounts had been set aside in past years but all of it was spent to fund last year's proposals. John suggested putting a reserve amount in a priority list after all the presentations are made and discussing it along with the current proposals.

Discussion of Select Board Concerns

Members emphasized CPAC's continuing practice of holding public hearings to gather input on the proposals. In addition the proposals have been posted on the CPAC webpage – www.amherstma.gov/cpa. Additional information will be posted as it is received. Our next Public Hearing will be on Thursday Feb.18, 2010 at 7pm in the Town Room.

Alisa Brewer asked about the Select Board having input on this year's proposals. It was suggested that the Public Hearing also be posted as a Select Board meeting. CPAC members value any input the Select Board would provide either as a Board or as individuals.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mary, seconded by Vince to adjourn at 9:06 pm. Voted unanimously.

NEXT MEETINGS

Our meetings will usually occur on the third Thursday of the month from September through April. Our next meeting will be **January 21, 2010 at 7:00 pm** in the Town Room of Town Hall when we will hear Affordable Housing and Historic Preservation presentations. Additional meetings are scheduled for Feb. 4 (Open Space and Recreation presentations), Feb. 18 (Public Hearing), March 18, and April 15, 2010.

DOCUMENTS DISTRIBUTED

- Agenda
- Spreadsheet "Financial Status for CPA Funds" 1/7/10, 1 page
- Email Letter from Larry Shaffer, Re: University Drive, 1/7/10, 1 page

Respectfully submitted by Mary Streeter, Clerk

Approved February 4, 2010